



## The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association Inc.

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15 August 2025

Development Assessment Team

Northern Beaches Council

Dee Why

Dear Team

### **REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN**

The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association is a 107-year-old community association, representing the interests of residents, property owners and business proprietors of Palm Beach and Whale Beach and charged with preserving the beauty, character and amenity of the area.

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the latest version of the Community Participation Plan and record our appreciation of the fact that in preparing this Plan, the Council is prepared to go beyond the minimum standards set by the Department of Planning in relation to community participation. We particularly commend the statements of intent under the headings “Inform”, “Consult”, and “Determination” in the draft Plan which represent a significant raising of the standard of notification by the Council over historic levels. We also strongly support the Council’s Engagement principles that planning decisions should be made in an open, considered and transparent way.

We would like to put forward a number of suggestions which we believe would further improve community participation, without incurring significant costs for the Council: -

- (1) We suggest that the Plan should begin with an introductory paragraph recording the Council’s commitment to participation, such as the following: -

*“The Council is committed to meaningful consultation with the community in relation to planning proposals and development applications, in accordance with its obligations under the Local Government Act and the Environmental Planning Act. This Community Participation Plan*

*sets out the minimum standards the Council will adopt in order to facilitate such participation. The Council records its preference to exceed the minimum standards wherever possible and will seek to provide more information, rather than less, in any situation in pursuit of its obligations to service the needs of the community.”*

- (2) The mechanics of communication need to be changed to replace mail as the primary method of communication of planning proposals and development applications with e-mail. The mail service is now slower and less certain with fewer deliveries and with short periods allowed for response, delay is critical. It is not always addressed to the persons having the power to respond to such issues and does not reach them in time, particularly at holiday times. The Council should have an email address for all ratepayers – email communication is quick, direct and more economical than mail.
- (3) A period of 14 days for the community to provide its input on development applications is too short, even if the Council moves to email communication. So short a period limits the understanding of what is proposed, prevents the obtaining of professional advice, where necessary, and tends to produce short, unhelpful input which does not assist the Council in understanding the community's views. We believe strongly that the minimum period should be extended to 21 days, continuing the “blackout period” at Christmas/New Year summer holiday peak but adding the Easter week. (The period of 14 days and limited notification zone could be reserved for secondary dwelling D/A's and complying development).
- (4) The limitation of notification of development applications to two adjoining owners on each side and one or two opposite is inadequate, particularly for large or controversial development applications, such as those involving heritage, foreshore buildings, E1 zones and shop-top housing, environmentally sensitive areas and significant non-compliance with LEP or DCP. We believe that the notification zone should be the same as for planning proposals, i.e. a radius of 100 metres from the property in question.
- (5) Notification should be provided by the Council of modifications lodged in respect of D/A's and this notification should be made not just to adjoining owners but also to all those who have at that point lodged submissions. Otherwise the intent of informed consultation is defeated.
- (6) Decisions by the Council and/or the NBC Local Planning Panel should be notified to all those who have lodged submissions to the D/A in question and a link provided to the relevant minutes, again by email.
- (7) The Council is in a much better position than ratepayers to know when the Land & Environment Court reaches a decision on an appeal from a Council decision or deemed refusal and is in a better position to know how to access a copy of the judgement. There should be notification of such a decision to all those who lodged submissions on the D/A in question and a link provided to the judgement, again by email.
- (8) These decisions and other important planning events affecting a property should be entered on the Council's website against the relevant property, with some detail of the event concerned, e.g. “Appeal lodged with Land & Environment Court”.
- (9) The treatment of submissions by community associations such as ours as only representing only 1 submission needs to be reviewed. Such submissions represent the views of a significant body of membership (over 420 in our case) within a particular community, tend to be better researched and argued than the general public and more useful to the Council. They should be treated separately.

Again our thanks for the opportunity to contribute to the consideration of the Community Participation Plan.

Your truly

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